

Pelagic Observer Program Safety Policies

Training:

All POP observers must have completed and passed a NMFS Observer Safety training course before deployment. Every three years, observers must complete and pass a safety refresher course. Observers must take First Aid/CPR every three years.

Safety Gear:

The following health and safety gear will be issued to all POP observers and *must* be brought on board for every trip:

- Immersion suit with strobe and signal mirror*
- EPIRB*
- Automatic inflatable PFD (may substitute another USCG-approved PFD for the issued PFD upon agreement with POP staff)*
- First Aid Kit*

The following health and safety gear will be issued to observers upon their request:

- Back support belt*
- Bucket*

All safety gear should be checked for proper working condition before each trip or once a calendar quarter, whichever is more often. Consult your Safety Manual or call the POP safety coordinator for instructions on how to test the gear.

Pre-deployment:

A POP pre-trip safety checklist *must* be completed before the vessel leaves the dock. You *may not* deploy on a vessel that does not have a current USCG Commercial Fishing Vessel Examination decal or lacks any of the main safety items on the pre-trip safety checklist. If there are any deficiencies, contact the POP office. If you cannot reach the POP office, remember you cannot deploy on the vessel. *When in doubt, do not deploy!* It is also the POP's policy to allow observers to refuse to board a vessel for documented health and safety concerns, even if the vessel has a current USCG decal and passes the POP pre-trip safety checklist. However, in these cases the POP will require a written statement by the observer documenting the concerns.

During the trip:

- Observers are required to wear closed-toed footwear on deck. Bare feet or sandals are absolutely forbidden.
- During fishing operations, observers are required to wear a PFD while on deck. Observers are also required to wear a PFD when alone on deck.
- Observers may not help in any fishing activities or operation of the gear, or stand watches. However, observers may help with general clean up.
- Observers are prohibited from swimming during deployments.
- All injuries or illnesses will be reported to contract supervisor *and* POP staff.

After the trip:

- During debriefing, observers will provide information regarding injuries, illnesses, and close calls during the trip, as well as evidence of staph infections on the vessel.